

Edexcel

Exam Practice Resource

Unit 1: People and Politics

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Introduction

Timing

With **TWO** questions from a choice of **FOUR**, this neatly divides into **2 X 30 minutes** for each.

Part (a) is worth **5 marks** and should ideally take **2-3 minutes**.

Part (b) is worth **15 marks** and should ideally take about **9-10 minutes**.

Part (c) is worth **30 marks** and should take about **18 minutes**.

All the above are approximate and you can take more or less time, **PROVIDED THAT YOU PLAN CAREFULLY**.

How much to write for each question

Part (a) should ideally be **2-3 sentences**. Often you are called to cover **TWO** elements – for instance, two functions of a political party.

Part (b) should take up approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of a sheet of paper. Since writing size varies, so will the amount of paper used. Usually, the answer should be in three paragraphs, each one making and developing a different point.

✓ Useful tip (1)

To gain high marks, **Part (b)** questions expect you to discuss **THREE** separate points. Sometimes the question tells you this explicitly because it starts in this sort of way:

‘Explain and identify **THREE**...’

Sometimes, however, the question does not use the word ‘**THREE**’. For example, suppose this question was set:

‘Explain the benefits of proportional representation.’

For a high score, you would be expected to discuss **THREE benefits, giving relevant examples.**

Part (c) is the high-scoring question and so examiners expect **AT LEAST ONE SIDE**.

Unit 1 – New Paper 2

Please read the information in the box before starting this exam

- The time allowed for this paper is 1 hour
- The maximum mark for this paper is 100
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets at the end of each question
- You should answer any TWO of questions 1-4
- Clearly label your answers
- The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will be taken into account.

Answer TWO questions

It is best practice to divide the available time equally between both questions

1. (a) How does political authority operate in a democracy? (5)
(b) Define the rights and obligations that feature in the UK's political life. (15)
(c) Analyse the strengths of representative democracy in the UK. (30)

2. (a) Explain TWO tactics that are used by pressure groups to achieve their aims (5)
(b) What factors cause pressure groups to fail? (15)
(c) Are pressure groups essential for democracy? (30)

3. (a) What is a referendum? (5)
(b) Explain THREE referendums that have been used in the UK. (15)
(c) Can referendums be damaging to democracy? (30)

4. (a) Define a political party. (5)
(b) What are the principle ideas of the Conservative Party? (15)
(c) In what areas has the Labour Party abandoned its core beliefs? (30)

Unit 1 – New Paper 2: Question 1

Sample Answers and Examiner's Advice

Sample Answer – Question 1a (5 marks)

Political authority can be defined as the legitimate right to carry out certain actions in democracy. Political authority is exercised by governments as they claim the right to act after the result of an election. Having been elected, they have the authority or power to make changes in society – by passing laws for instance. We could argue that ultimate political authority and power is in the hands of the electorate as it is voters who confer the legitimacy upon their chosen political party or parties.

Examiner's Advice – Question 1a (5 marks)

It is important to make sure that authority is linked to the legitimisation of power. Given that this is a Part (a) question, there is only time to raise a maximum of two points.

Unit 1 – New Paper 2: Question 1

Sample Answers and Examiner's Advice

Sample Answer – Question 1b (15 marks)

Citizens in the UK have certain obligations or duties. At the same time, citizens have certain rights. Obligations which citizens have to comply with include a huge array of laws passed by Parliament. These cover a wide spectrum. For instance, parents have an obligation to provide children with a minimum level of welfare. If citizens are involved in a serious car accident in which others are hurt, there is a duty to report the matter to the police. The criminal law contains a huge number of obligations which people must abide by, ranging from minor assault up to murder. People cannot take the law into their own hands and act as vigilantes. Businesses are bound by a whole network of measures which impose duties to protect the consumer.

By contrast, citizens can be said to enjoy certain rights. These also cover a wide spectrum. For instance, citizens have the right to free education for their children until they reach the age of 19. Throughout their life all citizens can claim free medical treatment from the NHS. Under UK laws, citizens are allowed to practise a religion of their choice. A number of political rights are also available to citizens. These range from the right to vote (once 18 years old), the right to free speech and the right to protest. Employees have rights such as the right to be paid a minimum wage and employment rights in the workplace.

Examiner's Advice – Question 1b (15 marks)

This response covers the range of both rights and duties or obligations. It is selective because of time constraints. There are many other rights or duties that could have been included. To obtain marks in the top level, it is necessary to give a relevant example of each right or duty.

Unit 1 – New Paper 2: Question 1

Sample Answers and Examiner's Advice

Sample Answer – Question 1c (30 marks)

Representative or indirect democracy has developed over two centuries in the UK. At the start of the 19th century, only 2% of people were eligible to vote. Today, 98% are eligible to vote. It is often argued that representative democracy was difficult to establish but, once established, brought a politically stable and economically prosperous society. Representative democracy has a number of strengths.

Given the size and population of the UK, direct democracy is impossible. Representative democracy is a tangible alternative and it works. It allows citizens to choose their representatives and governments. The people can throw governments out and elect new ones, with a peaceful transition of power from one administration to the next. Most parties accept the rules of the game, abide by them and respect the outcome. In 1997, for example, the Conservatives were removed from office and Labour formed a new government. Both parties abided by the electoral rules and the result was not doubted.

It is accepted by most people that the system of representative democracy is fair. All citizens have the vote. Political parties can be spring up and contest elections as UKIP did. There is a wide acceptance of civil liberties which enable political activity to take place. These include free speech and the right to protest against governments without fear of persecution. Levels of political education and awareness compare to those in the previous century and citizens can take a greater political involvement should they choose. A free and open media which provides people with political information supplements this even further.

There are strong grounds for arguing that political stability and economic prosperity are created by representative democracy. The UK is the world's fourth largest economy. This feat is the product of the stability and strength of representative democracy in the UK.

Another strength of representative democracy is the system of accountability that it creates. Governments are held to account for their actions both in Parliament through the system of scrutiny and also at election time when governments have to account to the public for their record while in office. In 1997 the public was not impressed with the Conservative government's record and voted Labour in. In 2001, the Labour government's mandate was renewed. Local government operates on the same principle, as do individual MPs who do not have their candidacy renewed if their record is perceived as being poor.

Representative democracy continues to evolve and adapt to address the public's needs. It is possible to argue that, in recent years, the system has improved. There is more representation in the provinces because of devolution. There has been an attempt to improve participation by introducing all-postal ballots. Citizenship is now part of the National Curriculum.

Examiner's Advice – Question 1c (30 marks)

This response has a direct focus on the strengths of representative democracy. It does not need or demand a balance. To gain top level marks, it is necessary to develop at least three relevant points and to provide evidence and detail to support them. The answer above contains four main points. The point about economic prosperity may seem a little tenuous as countries can economically advance even if they are undemocratic. But political stability does bring business stability. Each of the four points has been supported where possible by examples. Maximum marks would not be awarded without them.